

PIGEON RIVER-CANTON

NORTH CAROLINA



VISIT THE GREAT OUTDOORS!

Canton Comprehensive Plan Workshop: Parks, Open Space, and Greenways

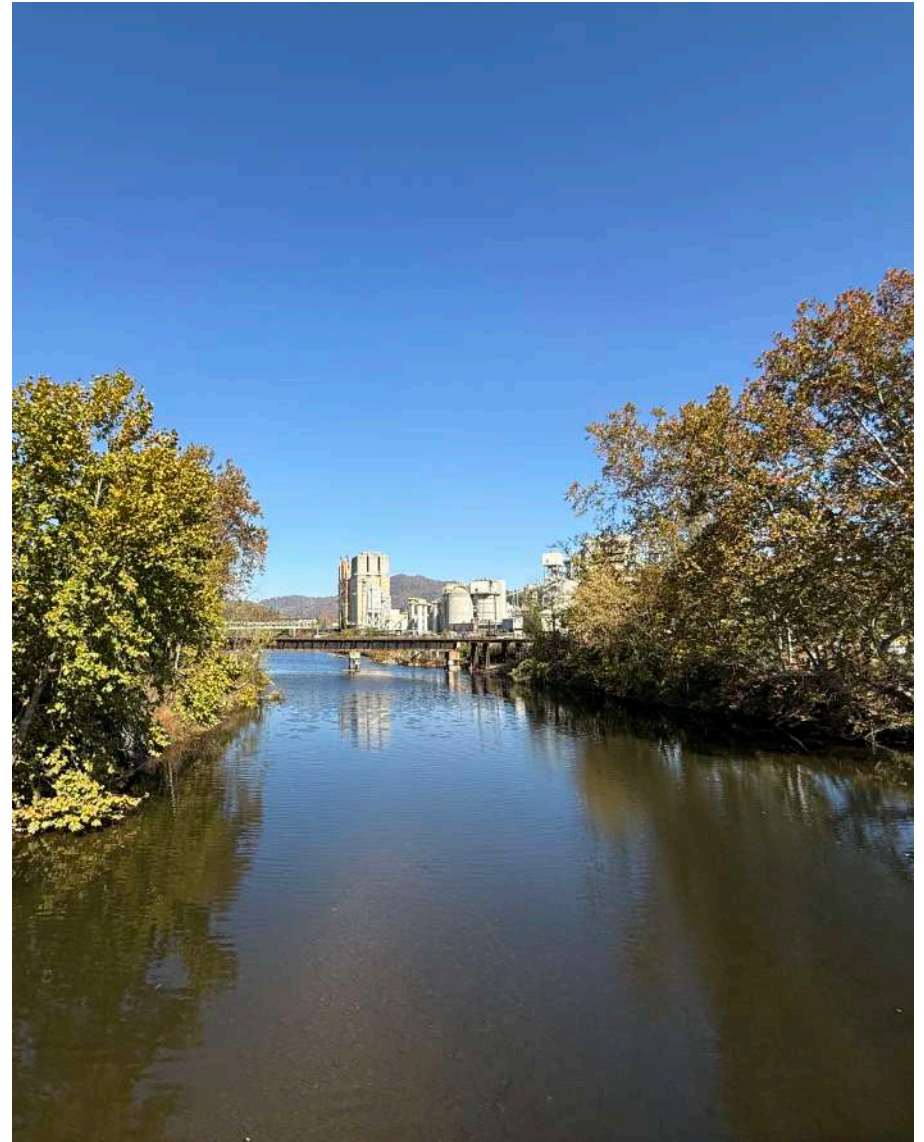
Workshop Agenda

Presentation: 10 minutes

Polling: 20 minutes

Table Work: 30 minutes

Discussion: 10 Minutes



Parks, Open Space, and Trails are Core Infrastructure

- Essential civic infrastructure, not just local amenity
- Support health, flood resilience, and economic development
- Increasingly define community identity and brand – trail towns are a thing
- Needed to keep up with competitors – they are all doing it



ROI: These Investments Pay Off and Pay Back

- Property values near trails often increase 5-20%
- Trail users (many times visitors) generate consistent local spending
- Green infrastructure reduces long-term capital costs
- Multi-purpose investments deliver stacked returns



Trails as Brand Identity: The Rise of Trail Towns

- Trails now function as tourism and talent attractors
- Brand identity drives visitation and investment
- Downtown-connected trails outperform isolated segments – double whammy for Downtown Canton
- The Pigeon is a unique asset that other Towns would love to enjoy



Businesses see measurable revenue gains.

Indianapolis , Indiana

Cultural Trail

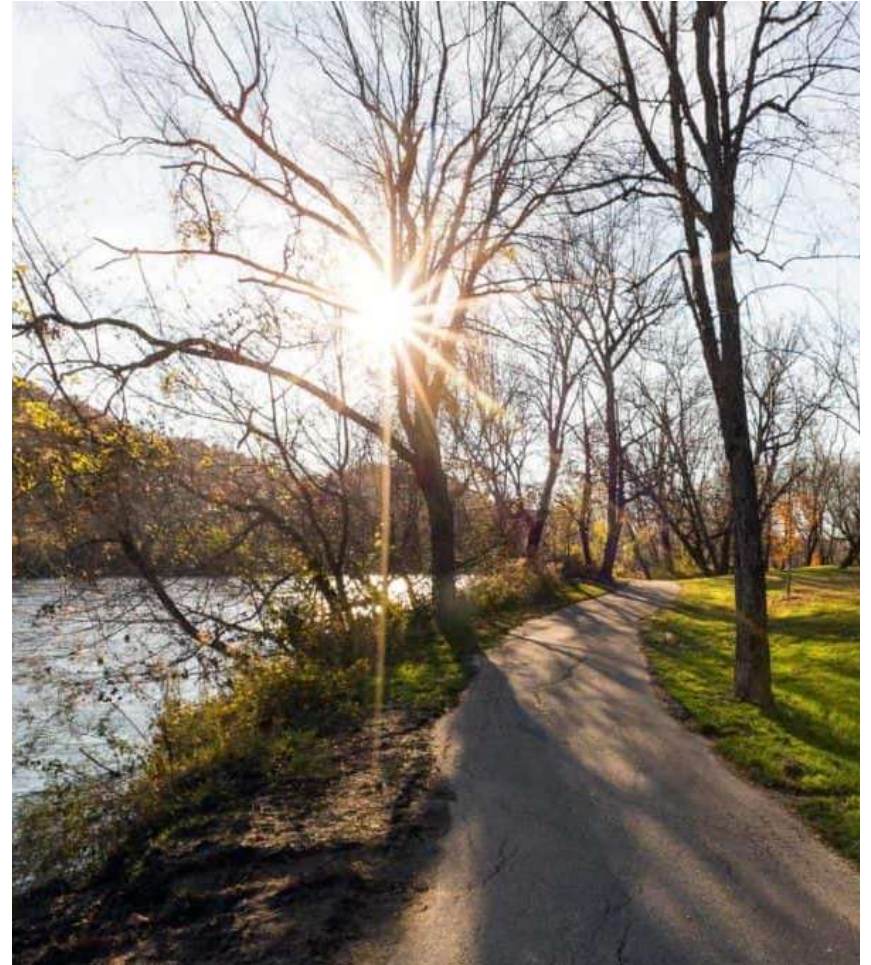
- Adjacent property values rose up to 148% in some segments
- Retail sales increased significantly along the corridor
- Over \$1 billion in private investment followed trail completion
- ROI: Parks and trails directly strengthen local commercial districts.



Greenways as Economic & Flood Infrastructure

Asheville, North Carolina

- French Broad River Greenway supports redevelopment
- Greenways preserve floodplain function
- Outdoor tourism generates tens of millions annually regionally
- Strengthened RAD
- ROI: Daily recreational use, Strengthens district, uses flood plain for economic benefit



Riverfront Parks as City-Defining Investments

Chattanooga, Tennessee

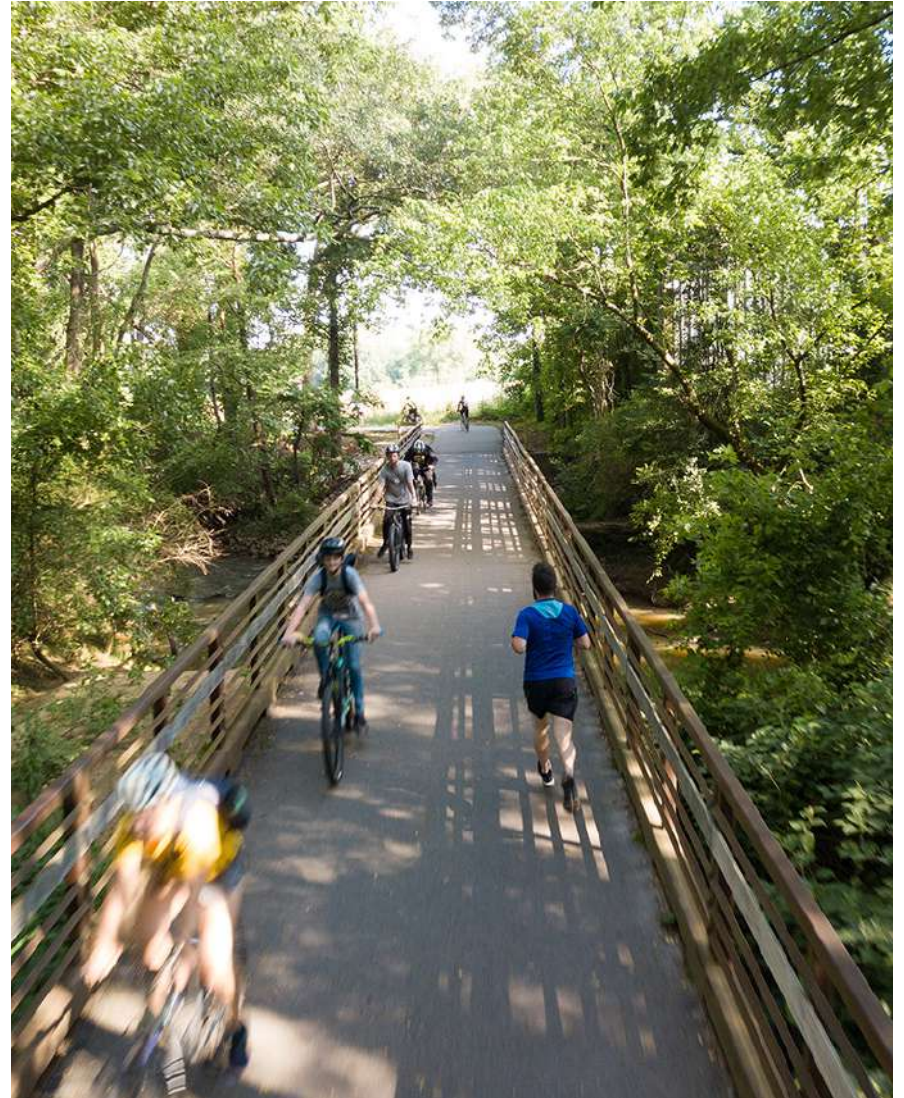
- Riverwalk investment sparked billions in private development
- Downtown population growth followed riverfront access
- Riverfront became core to city identity
- ROI: Early public dollars unlocked long-term reinvestment



Trails, Parks, and Property Values

Greenville, South Carolina

- Falls Park + Swamp Rabbit Trail rebranded the city
- Adjacent property values increased significantly
- Trail supports thousands of daily users
- Regional benefits – towns along the way are revived
- ROI: Expanded tax base exceeds maintenance costs



Trails as a City Brand and National Draw

Bentonville, Arkansas

- Over 130 miles of trails integrated citywide
- Millions invested leveraged national attention
- Outdoor identity attracts visitors and businesses
- ROI: Tourism and workforce attraction gains



Rural Trail Town

Damascus & Abington, Va

- Virginia Creeper Trail supports year-round visitation
- Trail users spend \$20–30 per visit locally
- Downtown businesses depend on trail traffic
- ROI: Trails offer opportunities to stabilize small town economies



Brevard & Wilkesboro, NC — Regional Trail Towns

Brevard and Hendersonville, NC

- Trails reinforce downtown vitality
- Regional trail connections amplify local impact
- Outdoor identity strengthens community pride
- Ecusta Trail expected to yield \$300-500M over 30 years, 200-300 jobs, land value increase, retail opportunities.



Hendersonville, NC — Streetscapes + Trails

Hendersonville, North Carolina

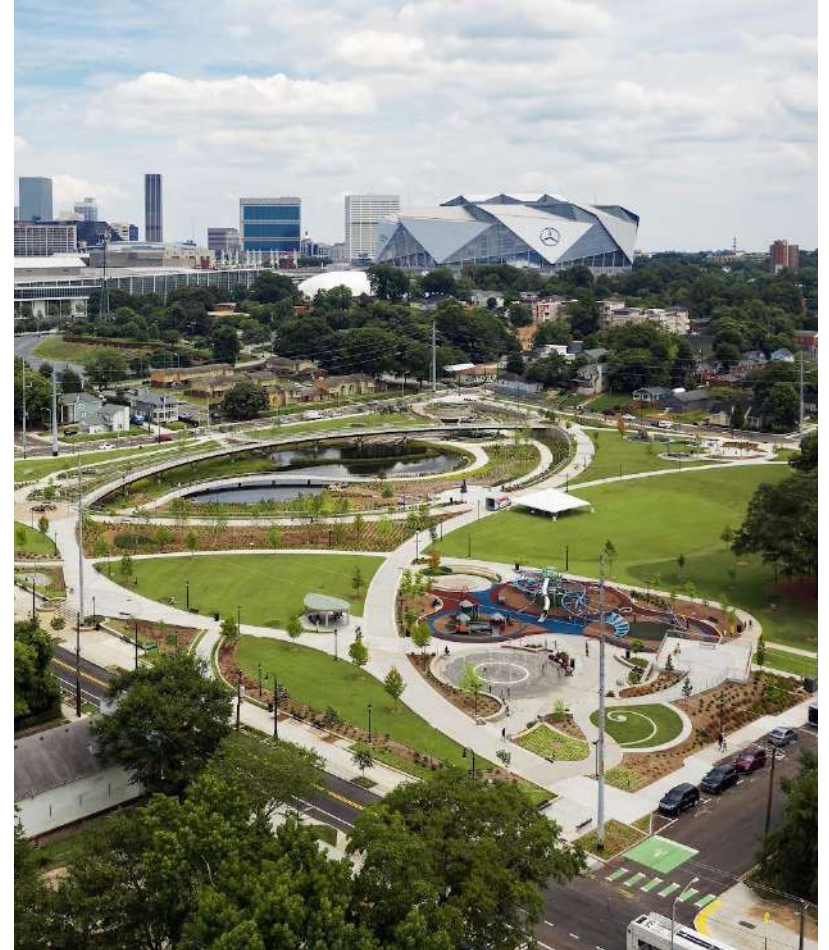
- Walkable streets increase retail sales 10–25%
- Public realm investment increases visit length
- Design reinforces town image and character



Floodable Parks & Resilience ROI

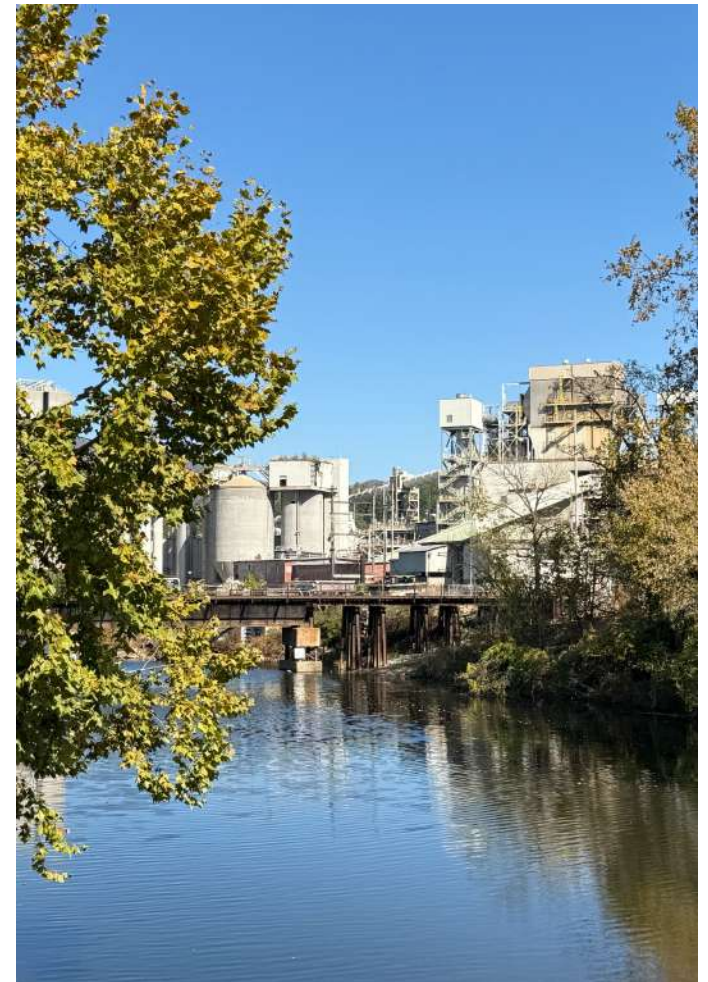
Atlanta, Georgia

- Floodplain parks reduce repetitive flood losses
- Green infrastructure improves water quality
- Everyday use + emergency performance
- ROI: Avoided flood recovery costs



What This Means for Canton

- Opportunity to reduce flood risk
- Strengthen downtown and river identity
- Strengthen revenue generation
- Strengthen visitation
- Connect neighborhoods
- Build a recognizable, resilient brand



The Pigeon River: A Defining Community Asset

- The Pigeon River is Canton's largest continuous open space asset
- Opportunity to function as floodplain, greenway, and community connector
- Floodable riverfront parks reduce flood damage while remaining usable most days
- River-adjacent trails increase property values and support recreation spending
- Multi-purpose riverfront projects are highly competitive for state and FEMA funding
- The Pigeon River can anchor Canton's identity as a regional river and trail town

